Lace Fern

Microlepia strigosa

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Spacing: 24 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Hay-scented Fern

Description:

Delicate looking, yet sturdy fronds that emerge light green and mature to a medium green, arch gracefully outwards; a spectacular groundcover for a woodland area; does best in light shade, or just morning sun

Ornamental Features

Lace Fern's attractive ferny bipinnately compound leaves emerge light green in spring, turning forest green in color the rest of the year on a plant with an upright spreading habit of growth.

Landscape Attributes

Lace Fern is a dense herbaceous evergreen fern with an upright spreading habit of growth. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Suckering

Lace Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Groundcover
- Container Planting
- Hanging Baskets



Lace Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Lace Fern
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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Planting & Growing

Lace Fern will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 24 inches apart. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant does best in partial shade to full shade. Keep it well away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It is quite adaptable, prefering to grow in average to wet conditions, and will even tolerate some standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Lace Fern is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor containers and hanging baskets. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.